

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of this Application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1-2, 4-5, and 7-8 are pending in this application. By this amendment, Claims 1-2, 4-5, and 7-8 are amended; Claims 3, 6, 9 and 10 are canceled; and no claims are added herewith. It is respectfully submitted that no new matter is added by this amendment.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1-10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over U.S. Patent Publication No. 2002/0064439 to Otaguro in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,473,993 to Tokunaga.

With regard to the rejection of the claims under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as unpatentable over Otaguro in view of Tokunaga, that rejection is respectfully traversed.

The applied art does not teach or suggest a door including a door body whose an outer shape is smaller than an inner shape of said first opening so as to close said first opening and at least one projection extending from the door body, wherein, in a condition where the door is positioned to close the first opening, the projection contacts with a peripheral portion of said first opening inside a wall of said chamber and an aperture, through which gas fluidically communicates between the interior and the exterior of the chamber, still remains between the outer shape of the door body and the inner shape of said first opening, as recited in Claim 1.

In contrast, Otaguro discloses a wafer processing apparatus with a chamber, a first opening and a door including a door body whose an outer shape is smaller than an inner shape of said first opening so as to close said first opening and at least one projection extending from the door body. As such, Otaguro fails to disclose that in a condition where the door is positioned to close the first opening, the projection contacts with a peripheral portion of said first opening inside a wall of said chamber and an aperture through which gas

fluidically communicates between the interior and the exterior of the chamber still remains between the outer shape of the door body and the inner shape of said first opening.

Tokunaga does not make up for the deficiencies of Otaguro discussed above. Specifically, Tokunaga discloses a wafer processing apparatus with a chamber, a first opening and a door including a door body. Tokunaga, however, fails to disclose that the door including at least one projection extending from the door body. Tokunaga also fails to disclose that in a condition where the door is positioned to close the first opening, the projection contacts with a peripheral portion of said first opening inside a wall of said chamber and an aperture through which gas fluidically communicates between the interior and the exterior of the chamber, still remains between the outer shape of the door body and the inner shape of said first opening.

As discussed in the Specification, in order to keep wafer processing apparatuses clean, the pressure within a mini-environment is maintained higher than an external ambient pressure by a predetermined pressure difference. As such, when a door is opened or closed during the transferring of a wafer, a gas flow from the interior of the mini-environment to the exterior is created, generating flow turbulence as the air flow passes over the door, thereby stirring up dust in the exterior that will cause contamination of the wafers inside the clean box. Applicants' advantageous projections as set forth in the claimed invention, are designed to eliminate, or significantly reduce, the above-described flow turbulence.

The features of the claimed invention are not taught or rendered obvious by the teachings in the applied art. Therefore, the applied art cannot provide at least the advantages discussed above. Withdrawal of the rejection under 103(a) is respectfully requested.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment, no further issues are believed to be outstanding in the present application, and the present application is believed to be in condition for formal Allowance. A Notice of Allowance is therefore earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner deem that any further action is necessary to place this application in even better form for allowance, the Examiner is encouraged to contact Applicants' undersigned representatives at the below listed telephone number.

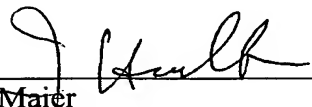
Respectfully submitted,

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